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Letter dated 25 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Friday, 26 February 2016, is the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Khojaly massacre committed by the Armenian forces during Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan.

On the night of 25 to 26 February 1992, the town of Khojaly, situated in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was brutally seized. The attack on and capture of the town involved the extermination of hundreds of Azerbaijanis, including women, children and the elderly. Thousands of civilians were maimed and taken hostage; many of them remain missing. The town was razed to the ground. The level of brutality in Khojaly was shocking. Atrocities included scalping, beheading, the bayoneting of pregnant women and the mutilation of bodies. The facts confirmed that the intentional slaughter of the civilians in Khojaly was directed at their mass extermination only because they were Azerbaijanis.

Apart from considerable information emanating from the law enforcement agencies of Azerbaijan, the responsibility of Armenia, including that of its political and military leadership and subordinate local armed groups, for the crimes

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committed in Khojaly has been exhaustively reported, recognized and documented by numerous mass media organizations, human rights groups, independent sources and eyewitnesses to the tragedy. Detailed information is contained in document A/67/753-S/2013/106.

Despite all this, Armenia continues to deny having committed atrocities in Khojaly. That denial is evident and has taken many forms, including through State policy designed to legitimate and/or justify war crimes, as well as to shift the blame on others. And, therefore, those responsible for this crime still enjoy impunity.

For 24 years now, victims' needs for justice, truth and reparation have been ignored, and their loss and sufferings have been abused.

The Government of Armenia should put an end to its policy of denial, come to terms with its modern history and recognize its responsibility for the Khojaly massacre.

The people of Azerbaijan have been striving for justice for 24 years. Azerbaijan's legitimate pursuit of justice will continue until it prevails.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35, 40, 68, 70, 72, 85 and 86, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative